

Hands On!!

By Carole Diehm, Field Consultant

This spring, I was privileged to sit in on part of a HANDS ON TEAM training with Sharon Wilkerson, Food Service Director, at the School Corporation of Brown County. To many of you who have been around a few years, the term Hands On is reminiscent of the H.O.T. Workshops (Hands On Training) which were presented by State Agency Consultants, Jane Regnier and Diane Rice. The concept of Hands On has not changed; the focus is still school meals. The emphasis of this HANDS ON TEAM training is meeting the dietary guidelines, and the sponsoring agency is the National Food Service Management Institute (NSFMI).

You may remember receiving an invitation for nutrient standard training through the HANDS ON TEAM project a couple or more years ago. In response to their invitation, NSFMI received approximately 400 school corporation indications of interest

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Medicaid Numbers

By Julie Sutton

We have had many calls concerning the use of a Medicaid case number to qualify students for free or reduced-price meal benefits. Medicaid numbers can not be accepted to qualify a student for benefits. If a family has a Medicaid number, they still must complete the income portion of the Application for Free and Reduced-Price Meals. TANF and Food Stamp case numbers are the only numbers that can be accepted as documentation of free meal eligibility.

Participation in the Direct Certification program can reduce the number of applications the School Corporation needs to process and can help to eliminate some of the problems connected with determining if a case number is legitimate. If you have questions concerning Direct Certification, please contact John Todd, Team Leader, at 800-537-1142.

Because Medicaid numbers look similar to Food Stamp and TANF numbers, the State Agency recommends that whenever possible all reported case numbers are double checked with your local Department of Family and Children. At the very least, any number that appears questionable should be checked.

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**Last Years applications
may be used for the first 30
operating days of school.**

Hands On continued

which were followed by 250 serious applications for the on-site training. Initially NSFMI expectations were to select 105 school corporations chosen from the applications through a first-come first-serve system. NSFMI funding, from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), runs through the end of 1999. As of April, 1999, 106 school corporations have received HANDS ON TEAM training, and eight of these training events have taken place in Indiana, with three more scheduled.

When Sharon indicated interest in a HANDS ON TEAM visit in early 1998, she was only beginning to write and analyze NuMenus for the corporation's six schools. In the ensuing year and a half, she made good progress and felt she was "on track, but hearing it from someone else helps." Terry Mendez, R.D. one of the fifteen consultants contracted by NFSMI, worked with Sharon for three full days in early March. Terry is highly qualified with extensive experience as a HANDS ON TEAM consultant. She has experience as an assistant school food service director and as a Texas State Agency field consultant. To Terry, the term "Hands On Team" means working together in a "lab" situation, and this was how she and Sharon worked. "Her expertise in nutrient analysis and menu planning was invaluable. The eighteen months or so since I responded to the invitation have helped me prepare myself. It was very helpful." Sharon commented.

Since NFSMI did not schedule consultants to work in their home states, Terry has formed a broad general impression of how well states are complying with the School Meals Initiative regulations. She reported that most states are experiencing the same types of challenges. Whether food-based or NuMenus, it is challenging to obtain and update nutrient information from suppliers for each and every food item. It is challenging to write standardized recipes and complete production records. Meeting the nutrient standards, while controlling labor and food costs, and being ready for a nutrient analysis visit from the state are also concerns.

While the sign-up phase of Hands On Team is long past, some of the benefits of their efforts may be passed along by food service directors who experienced the training. Other Indiana districts who have received the HANDS ON TRAINING include;

Muncie Community Schools in Delaware County, Southwest Dubois County School Corporation, Prairie Heights Community School Corporation in LaGrange County, Westview School Corporation in LaGrange County, North Newton School Corporation in Newton County, Duneland School Corporation in Porter County, and South Bend Community School Corporation in St. Joseph County. Three more school corporations are scheduled for this fall including; Hanover Community School Corporation in Lake County, Northwest Allen County Schools, and Fort Wayne Community Schools in Allen County.

Editor's note: Sandy Reed, field consultant for Indiana state agency, is one of the consultants for NSFMI and has traveled to Oregon, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania to present HANDS ON TEAM training sessions.

USDA Mailings

By Diane Rice

More than 130 School Food Authorities (SFA) in Indiana have reported that training materials direct mailed by USDA since 1996 were not received. As a result, a USDA order form for A Menu Planner for Healthy School Meals was included in a recent State Agency mailing to Food Service Directors. This menu planner was packaged in a purple three ring binder. Each kitchen should have one. For those who still do not have the menu planner, please complete the order form and send it to USDA at the address on the form.

The four books listed below were previously sent to SFAs by USDA (one of each book per SFA). A list of SFAs that have contacted us about not receiving the material has been submitted to USDA. The books will be sent directly to each SFA. If you have not previously contacted us about this issue and would like copies of the books, please contact Diane Rice toll free at (800) 537-1142 or, locally at (317) 232-0850.

1. Serving It Safe
2. Choice Plus
3. Cooking A World of New Tastes
4. A Guide for Purchasing Food Service Equipment

Food Distribution and Business Process Reengineering (BPR)

By Mike Gill

The Food Distribution Program BPR process is well underway. If you are not familiar with this USDA initiated project, you may want to visit the ACDA and USDA Web sites <<http://www.commodity.org.html>> or <<http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/menu/fd2000.html>>. The Commodity Ordering and Reengineering (CORE) team project may have a major impact on how food distribution customers relate to the State Agency and USDA.

The CORE team completed the first stage of the BPR process in early June 1999. USDA has assigned six "CORE Project Assessment Teams" to review the CORE recommendations. Each team has been assigned to one of six broad review areas. These include: Processing, Ordering, Seamless Program Operations (Customer View), Distribution/Delivery, Policy Issues, and Computer Implications. These teams are expected to complete their work and submit recommendations to the Senior Oversight Committee (SOC) by the end of October, 1999. After a review process including possible changes, SOC will present recommendations to the Commodity Improvement Council (CIC). Another review and possible change process will take place. Preliminary USDA "CORE" recommendations for program changes should be available for public review and comment by late December 1999.

Public listening forums will be held within each of seven USDA Regions. The forums are expected to take place before the end of February 2000. Based on comments from the region forums, letters, e-mail, and faxes, the CIC will formulate the final USDA plans for changing the Food Distribution Program. The plan may call for demonstration projects to test the proposed changes. The plan should be ready for implementation by late March 2000.

The time lines discussed above are only estimates and may be adjusted by USDA based on team progress, and the quantity and quality of public comments.

If you do not have direct access to the World Wide Web in your food service operation, you may want to

consider getting connected within the next two years. Indiana is moving toward a food distribution system that can be accessed on the Internet.

Please visit the State Agency Web page at <<http://www.doe.state.in.us/food/distribution.html>> for additional information regarding food distribution. The Food Distribution Program Administrative Procedure Manual is now available on the Web site.

Lending Library List

By Diane Rice

Our newly revised listing should finally be on your desk, so find the one dated November 1995 and throw it out! There are 139 titles of books, manuals, videos, and a few slides or filmstrips listed and available for schools to borrow either for training food service staff or for individual study. The listing will also be on our website. Fifteen of the titles should already be on your shelves. Items may be borrowed by mail or FAX using the order blank on the last page. If there are questions about specific items, call Diane Rice at (800) 537-1142 toll free, or locally at 232-0850.

School Food Service Employee of the Year

By Diane Rice

The Division again seeks your nominations for the third annual Senator Richard G. Lugar School Food Service Employee of the Year. An information brochure containing instructions is included and will be sent to all schools. This award recognizes an employee who provides outstanding service to students and faculty. The winner will be announced on March 11, 2000 at the ISFSA state conference Saturday morning general session. Last year Senator Lugar was there in person to present the award to Jean Anne Sircey, cafeteria manager of Lakeside Middle School in Fort Wayne. For doing such a great job that her principal wanted to nominate her, she was given a check for \$500 from the Indiana Farm Bureau to spend with no restrictions.

We are sure there are other outstanding employees out there and we encourage you to nominate someone from your school. Nominations will be accepted until late January 2000. If there are questions about the instructions, please contact Annette Smith at (800) 537-1142 tollfree, or locally at 232-0850.

Breakfast Toolkit

By Jane Regnier

Near the end of October 1999, school food authorities will be receiving a copy of the School Breakfast Toolkit that was developed by the 5-Star Child Nutrition Task Force. The toolkit is a necessary resource for anyone interested in implementing or expanding their school breakfast program. It is designed to increase the awareness and importance of a nutritious breakfast. The toolkit covers three basic areas: the link between breakfast and learning, how to implement a school breakfast program, and ways to enhance an existing school breakfast program. Included in the Toolkit is a Power Point presentation on the value of breakfast and ten different lessons/resources. Problem solving assistance is also provided.

The toolkit is being reviewed by the American School Food Service Association for continuing education credit approval. Plans are to highlight the kit at workshops throughout the Midwest Region. If you would like additional copies, please contact Jane Regnier at 800/537-1142. Copies may also be directly ordered from the National Food Service Management Institute at 800/321-3054 (Item Number EX42-99), at a cost of \$3.00 per kit.

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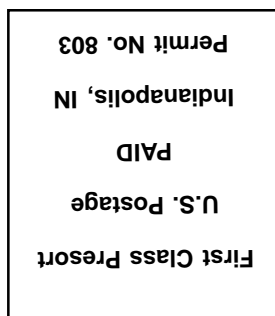
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